



CITY OF ATLANTA

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KEISHA LANCE BOTTOMS
MAYOR

March 22, 2020

Berryl A. Anderson
Chief Magistrate
DeKalb County Magistrate Court
556 N. McDonough Street
DeKalb County Courthouse
Decatur, Georgia 30030

Dear Chief Magistrate Anderson:

I hope that this letter finds you safe and in good health.

Last week I called on City of Atlanta authorities, including Atlanta Housing and Invest Atlanta, to temporarily ban the filing of evictions in their respective properties. Now, as many of our residents are facing unexpected wage losses due to a multitude of pandemic-related reasons (unemployment, reduced hours, staying home with children as schools are closed, etc.), I urge you to halt the filing of evictions for non-payment for all residents in Fulton County.

While I commend you for issuing the Order stalling non-essential activities, including eviction proceedings, this Order still leaves families vulnerable to being evicted – and potentially becoming homeless – soon after the order expires. Furthermore, it allows landlords to file evictions that leave stains on families' records that can be difficult to overcome when applying for apartments or rental homes in the future.

Courts and other community leaders across the country are exploring and implementing solutions to this problem. The City of San Jose, for example, is prohibiting landlords from filing evictions or issuing notices of termination for tenants who provide documentation of pandemic-related hardships before their rent is due. As we work to make our city and region one that is equitable, I ask that you consider this approach during this state of emergency.

In the midst of this COVID-19 pandemic, we have all been reminded how deeply housing stability is tied to public health. More than ever, it essential that our residents can remain in their homes so that they can responsibly self-distance, not only for their individual health, but for our community health and the well-being of our residents who are most impacted by COVID-19.

I ask that you join me in exhausting all means to extend justice and compassion to our more vulnerable residents during this challenging time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Keisha Bottoms". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Keisha Lance Bottoms